

CLAIMS

That which is claimed:

1. A method comprising:
 - (a) receiving data associated with an article;
 - (b) determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article; and
 - (c) determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article comprises identifying at least one image file associated with the article.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article comprises determining an image data score based in part on at least the image data signal.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article comprises determining an image data signal for a plurality of images associated with the article, and determining an image data score for each image.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal comprises selecting an image associated with the highest image data score.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
 - (d) generating a representative image that includes surrounding context of the image with the highest image data score.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal comprises comparing the image data signal to a predefined threshold.
8. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
determining a default image associated with the article; and
determining an image data score for the default image.
9. The method of claim 7, wherein determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal further comprises selecting an image associated with a highest image data score.
10. The method of claim 8, wherein determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal comprises comparing the image data scores for the plurality of images to a predefined threshold.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on an image data signal comprises selecting an image that meets a predetermined criterion.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein a predetermined criterion comprises at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles, image frequency over multiple articles within a particular web site, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, whether the image is associated with submission of a form, image caption, text adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image.

13. The method of claim 7, wherein determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal further comprises: if the image data signal matches the predefined threshold, then selecting the image associated with the image data signal; and if the image data signal does not match the predefined threshold, then selecting a default image as a representative image.

14. The method of claim 2, wherein identifying at least one image file associated with the article comprises determining at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, image caption, text

adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image.

15. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one image file comprises at least one of the following: a gif file, a bmp file, a png file, a jpeg file, a jpg file, an image file, a photo file, and a screenshot.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein determining an image data signal for each image comprises determining a score based on at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles, image frequency over multiple articles within a particular web site, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, whether the image is associated with submission of a form, image caption, text adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image.

17. The method of claim 8, wherein the default image is selected from at least one of the following: a screenshot of a client application, a no image available icon, a predefined section of an article, an icon associated with an article, an icon representing an application program associated with the article, an icon representing a person associated

with the article, an icon representing a person associated with a messaging application, and an icon representing a person associated with an e-mail.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(d) outputting the representative image in a search result associated with the article.

19. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(d) outputting the representative image associated with the article in a set of selected articles.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the representative image is based in part on at least an article associated with an event.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein the search result includes an article associated with a client device and an article associated with a network.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the search result is in response to at least one of the following: an explicit query from a user, and an implicit query generated by a search engine.

23. A computer-readable medium containing program code, comprising:

(a) program code for receiving data associated with an article;

- (b) program code for determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article; and
- (c) program code for determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal.

24. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the program code for determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article comprises identifying at least one image file associated with the article.

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein program code for determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article comprises determining an image data score based in part on at least the image data signal.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein program code for determining an image data signal for an image associated with the article comprises determining an image data signal for all images associated with the article, and determining an image data score for each image.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein program code for determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal comprises selecting the image associated with the highest image data score.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising:

(d) program code for generating a representative image that includes surrounding context of the image with the highest image data score.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein program code for determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal comprises comparing the image data signal to a predefined threshold.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, further comprising:
program code for determining a default image associated with the article; and
program code for determining an image data score for the default image.

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 29, wherein program code for determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal further comprises selecting an image associated with a highest image data score.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 30, wherein program code for determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal comprises comparing the image data scores for the plurality of images to a predefined threshold.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein program code for determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on an image data signal comprises selecting an image that meets a predetermined criterion.

34. The computer-readable medium of claim 33, wherein a predetermined criterion comprises at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles, image frequency over multiple articles within a particular web site, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, whether the image is associated with submission of a form, image caption, text adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 29, wherein program code for determining a representative image based at least in part on the image data signal further comprises: if the image data signal matches the predefined threshold, then selecting the image associated with the image data signal; and if the image data signal does not match the predefined threshold, then selecting a default image as a representative image.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the program code for identifying at least one image file associated with the article comprises determining at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, image caption, text adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from

other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image.

37. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the at least one image file comprises at least one of the following: a gif file, a bmp file, a png file, a jpeg file, a jpg file, an image file, a photo file, and a screenshot.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the program code for determining an image data signal for an image comprises determining a score based on at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, image caption, text adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 30, wherein the default image is selected from at least one of the following: a screenshot of the image, a no image available screen, an icon associated with an article, an icon representing an application program associated with the article, an icon representing a person associated with the article, an icon representing a person associated with a messaging application, and an icon representing a person associated with an e-mail.

40. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, further comprising:
- (d) program code for outputting the representative image in a search result associated with the article.
41. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, further comprising:
- (d) program code for outputting the representative image associated with the article in a set of selected articles.
42. The computer-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the representative image is based in part on at least an article associated with an event.
43. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the search result includes an article associated with a client device and an article associated with a network.
44. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the search result is in response to at least one of the following: an explicit query from a user, and an implicit query generated by a search engine.
45. A method comprising:
- (a) receiving data associated with an article;
- (b) determining an image data for an image associated with the article, wherein the image data signal comprises at least one of the following: file extension name, file name, file size, image dimensions, image aspect ratio, image frequency over multiple articles,

image frequency over multiple articles within a particular web site, location of image within an article, data adjacent to image, whether the image is associated with submission of a form, image caption, text adjacent to image, color distribution in image, text in links to the image from other pages, text nearby links to the image from other pages, headings and other text in pages that link to the image, and number of colors in image;

(c) determining a representative image for the article based at least in part on the image data signal;

(d) comparing the image data signal to a predefined threshold, wherein the image is selected as a representative image if the image data signal is at least the predefined threshold, and wherein if the image data signal is not at least the predefined threshold, then selecting a default image as a representative image; and

(e) displaying the representative image in a search result associated with the article.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the default image is selected from at least one of the following: a screenshot of the image, a no image available screen, and an icon representing an application program associated with the article.